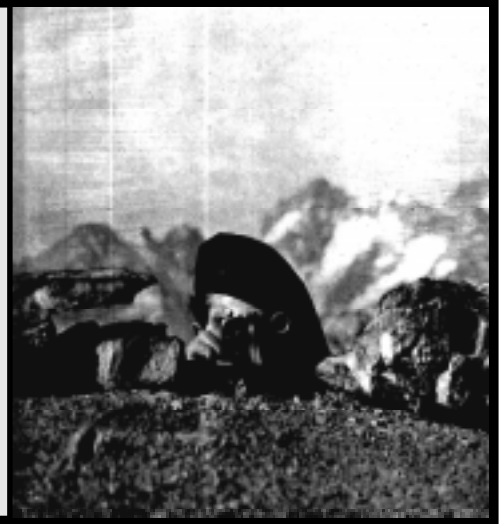


VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

Number 2

May 95



PREP FIRE

Hello and welcome to the second issue of View From The Trenches, the UK ASL players 'zine. Despite the lack of response to the first issue, we're back, bigger (a lie) and better (a hope) than before.

My name is Pete Phillipps, and I'm the editor, writer, publisher, of this little thing. I'm a 27 year old long haired heavy metal fan, who's been involved in gaming for some 17 years now. I use to belong to a small group of friends who played games (mostly old SPI stuff, SL, or 3R) on a regular basis, but with everyone moving away, gaming opportunities in the past few years have been limited to say the least. Nowadays, my gaming is limited to occasional games of ASL, and even then I only play stuff that uses Chapters A-D (although I've got all the ASL stuff apart from the Deluxe modules and a couple of the scenarios from The General).

So why am I doing a 'zine for a game that I have limited experience with, and rarely play on a regular basis? Because, despite all that I enjoy playing ASL and love the system. What other game allows you to fight tactical combat anywhere in the world, with such a vast array of different forces? I've no doubt there are many in a similar situation, and doing this 'zine allows everyone to share our enjoyment of ASL.

The future for ASL support from Avalon Hill looks bleak to be honest, judging

by the problems they seem to have in getting the '94 annual, KGP II, and the minor allies stuff out. If Avalon Hill carry on like this, the only support for the game will be from the amateur press. So I'd like to repeat my request for contributions, letters, anything you'd like to say about ASL. I don't mind doing this 'zine but without any outside contributions, it'll feel like I'm just doing it for myself.

Some of you are no doubt wondering why you get this 'zine. Basically you either get it because you replied to my advert in The General for ASL opponents, or you've had a similar ad in The General recently.

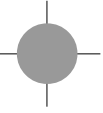
Like a number of ASL fans I've considered playing the game by mail (PBM), and I've got a copy of a PBM system from an American ASL gamer. It looks playable, and I'm due to start a trial game soon, so I'll let you know how it goes. If anyone wants a copy, I can send you a copy, although I might have to charge for photocopying.

'Til next time, roll low and prosper.

Pete Phillipps

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COMMANDER'S NOTEBOOK

The aim of 'Commander's Notebook' is to provide brief notes on the play of ASL. These can be tactical hints, scenario notes, or even a look at a particular aspect of the system, such as armour, air support, or even seaborne assault.

Before you start playing any ASL scenario, you need to come up with a plan of action if you want to win. But to come up with a reasonable plan, you need to take into account all the factors which might influence the scenario. Whether you have to attack or defend these factors are the same; the aim, the forces involved, and the terrain.

THE AIM

In any ASL scenario the aim is determined by the victory conditions. Whether you have to capture or destroy an objective, hold a feature, withdraw a portion of your forces, or simply kill a large portion of the enemy force, you must always bear them in mind.

THE FORCES

Knowing your aim you can now consider the forces you have, and those of the enemy. Look at firepower, mobility, morale. Can one or both sides fight at long range, or is close combat fighting preferred? Does either side have the mobility to move rapidly from one position to another? What special weapons (FT, DC, OBA, armour) are available to give one side an advantage? How can you minimise the advantages these give the enemy?

THE TERRAIN

At the same time it is also important to consider the scenario terrain. It is important to find the ground of tactical importance (the piece of ground which, if held, makes it difficult for the enemy to hold the surrounding area), the approaches to it, and the cover available from enemy LOS and fire (not necessarily the same thing). There may be several such areas spread across the board, particularly in a large action.

Any attacker will often have to take this ground, even if it is not a target, simply

because the defender controls the approaches while he holds it.

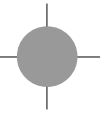
As an attacker, you must also consider the placement of fortifications such as WIRE or Minefields, which are often sited to channel an attacker into a chosen killing ground.

Do not forget to take into account the scenario length. As a defender it is simply a matter of holding out until the end of the scenario, but as an attacker you must take into account the time it will take to approach the objective as well as the time to take it. Scenario length will probably affect your choice of approach to the objective.

CONCLUSION

Having considered all these factors, you are now in a position to make an outline plan. Select your starting point(s), approach(es), and the best location(s) to provide any necessary covering fire. Having done all this, you put the plan to the test. If your plan is good you might win. If not, at least you live to learn and (re)fight it another day. Real soldiers do not have that luxury.

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FINAL FIRE

Well that's all this time 'round. The next issue will hopefully be sent out in early July. I hope I hear from you all before then. Remember, VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES is a chance for us ASL players to talk to each other, but if we don't talk, it will fail. It's future is in your hands.

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES is an independant British ASL newsletter. It is available free on request (although an SAE is much appreciated). All correspondence should be sent to Pete Phillipps, 49 Lombardy Rise, Leicester, LE5 0FQ.

